

REMARKS

The specification (including the Title and Abstract) of the patent application has been rewritten to comply with U.S. patent practice. This involved reformatting the specification, for example, to include appropriate section headings. No new matter has been introduced.

A substitute specification marked to show changes made relative to the original specification (i.e., the English translation of International Application PCT/EP2004/007651 filed with the PTO on January 25, 2006) is attached hereto. The substitute specification includes no new matter. A clean version (without markings) of the substitute specification is also attached.

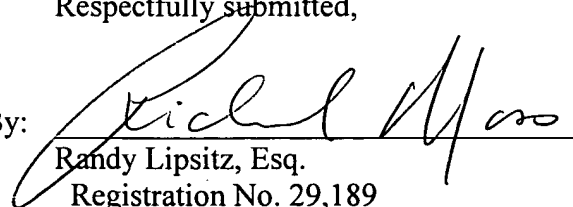
Claims 1-11 were originally presented. Claims 1-11 have been amended to place them in appropriate U.S. patent claim format. New dependent claims 12 and 13 have been added. No new matter has been introduced.

Applicants respectfully request that this Preliminary Amendment be entered prior to substantive examination of this patent application.

No fee is believed due. Please charge any fee deficiency to Deposit Account No. 50-0540.

Respectfully submitted,

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~~Method for refilling brake circuits after a large consumption of compressed air and device for carrying out said method~~
METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR REFILLING BRAKE CIRCUITS AFTER A LARGE CONSUMPTION OF COMPRESSED AIR



BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to a method and system ~~according to the preamble of claim 1~~ for refilling brake circuits after rapid compressed air consumption ~~as well as to a device for performing the method.~~

~~There are known in~~ Multi-circuit protective valves are known that divide ~~the an~~ energy supply into several mutually independent ~~load~~ consumer circuits and ~~that~~, in the event of failure of a circuit, for example by line rupture, maintain a minimum pressure in the intact circuits. If a defect allowing more air to be lost than can be refilled by the compressor occurs in a service-brake circuit, the pressure in the service-brake circuits drops mutually until the closing pressure of the valve is reached. The pressure in the defective circuit continues to drop, whereas the closing pressure is maintained in the intact circuits. While the pressure in the defective circuit continues to drop, the circuits that is are still intact can be refilled by the compressor until the opening pressure of the defective circuit is reached. ~~There is established a~~ dynamic equilibrium is established, in which the delivered compressed air can supply the circuits that are still intact (as well as secondary ~~load~~ consumer circuits), although at the same time air is being lost via the defect. A disadvantage of such known multi-circuit protective valves is that refilling by the compressor ~~needs~~ takes a relatively long time, ~~since~~ because the compressor has only a relatively small delivery capacity, ~~namely only approximately~~ 200 to 400 liters per minute ~~as a rule~~. Accordingly, the nominal energy in the brake system is restored ~~only slowly, thus --~~ representing a disadvantage ~~for~~ with respect to system safety.

SUBSTITUTE SPECIFICATION

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

~~The~~Generally speaking, in accordance with~~object of the present invention, is to~~
~~provide a method and a device for performing the method,~~system are provided whereby the air
pressure in the vehicle brake circuits can be restored ~~very~~ rapidly after rapid compressed air
consumption.

~~This object is achieved by the invention according to claim 1. A device for~~
~~performing the method is specified in claim 5.~~

~~Advantageous and expedient improvements of the invention are specified in the~~
~~dependent claims.~~

In accordance with ~~The~~the present invention, proposes to fill the brake circuits are
filled, after rapid air consumption, from a high-pressure ~~load~~consumer circuit in addition to the
compressor. Since a high-pressure circuit can usually deliver a much larger air flow per unit
time (up to several thousand liter/min.) than a compressor (approximately 200 to 400 liter/min.),
the intact brake circuits are refilled ~~very~~ much faster than merely by means of the compressor.
~~Thereby~~As a result, the nominal energy in the brake system, possibly reduced by a defective
circuit, can be restored in a very short time. This is particularly important after a circuit break.
System safety is substantially improved by distributing the energy between the circuits. This is
achieved according to the present invention by providing, for the high-pressure circuit, an
electrically actuatable valve that is closed in the de-energized normal state, preferably a solenoid
valve (alternatively, ~~it is also possible to use a pilot-controlled valve~~ can be used), and, for the
other ~~load~~consumer circuits, including the brake circuits, electrically actuatable valves that are
open in the normal state, preferably solenoid valves. All solenoid valves are in communication
with one another via a common distributor line. To fill the brake system, the solenoid valve of

the high-pressure circuit ~~merely has to be~~ switched to open position; in order to allow compressed air to flow out of the high-pressure circuit; in which the pressure or the energy has been conserved; via the open solenoid valves into the intact brake circuits.

Still other objects and advantages of the present invention will in part be obvious and will in part be apparent from the specification.

The present invention accordingly comprises the various steps and the relation of one or more of such steps with respect to each of the others, and embodies features of construction, combinations of elements, and arrangements of parts which are adapted to effect such steps, all as exemplified in the construction herein set forth, and the scope of the invention will be indicated in the claims.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The present invention will be ~~explained~~described in more detail hereinafter on the basis of the ~~attached drawing~~accompanying drawings, in which ~~there is illustrated a practical example, wherein:~~

Fig. 1 ~~shows~~is a block-schematic diagram of an inventively designed device for refilling of brake circuits after rapid compressed air consumption, a compressed air system according to an embodiment of the present invention; and

Fig. 2 ~~is a graphical representation showing~~shows a diagram of the pressure variations during an operation of refilling of the brake system in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

~~In the drawing,~~Referring now to Fig. 1, where compressed air lines are

represented by solid lines and electrical lines by broken lines. ~~The drawing shows, there is shown~~
a compressed air system 2 with a compressed air supply part 4 and a consumer part 6.

Compressed air supply part 4 ~~comprises~~includes a compressor 7, a compressor control device 8 and an air-dryer part 10.

Consumer part 6 is provided with a compressed air distributor line 14, a plurality of electrically actuatable solenoid valves 16, 18, 20, 22, 24 with restoring springs and a plurality of ~~load~~compressed air consumer circuits 26, 28, 30, 32, 34, 36, 38 supplied with compressed air via the solenoid valves.

From compressor 7, a compressed air supply line 40 leads via a filter 42, an air dryer 44 and a check valve 46 to distributor line 14, from which there are branched off lines 48, 50, 52, 54, 56 leading to the solenoid valves. From the solenoid valves, compressed air lines 58, 60, 62, 64, 66 lead to the ~~load~~consumer circuits. Line 62 splits into lines 62' and 62'' leading to circuits 30 and 32, a check valve 68 also being disposed in line 62''. A pressure limiter 70 is disposed in supply line 52. Line 54, which leads to solenoid valve 22, branches off downstream from pressure limiter 70. Line 64 splits into lines 64' and 64'' leading to circuits 34 and 36.

Pressure sensors 72, 74, 76, 78, 80, 82 monitor the pressure in the ~~load~~compressed air consumer circuits and in distributor line 14, and transmit the respective pressure as a pressure signal to electronic control unit 84, which ~~directly~~ controls the solenoid valves.

As an alternative to ~~the~~ pressure, it is also possible to monitor other variables of state, such as air flow rate, air mass and energy, in the ~~load~~consumer circuits and in the connecting line.

LoadCompressed air consumer circuits 26, 28 can be, for example, service-brake circuits. LoadCompressed air consumer circuit 30 can be a trailer-brake circuit, in which case

normally two lines, a supply line and a brake line, lead to the trailer. ~~Load~~Compressed air consumer circuit 32 can be a parking-brake circuit with spring accumulator. ~~Load-e~~Compressed air consumer circuits 34 and 36 can be secondary ~~load~~consumer circuits, such as operator's cab suspension, door controller, etc., in other words, all components that have nothing to do with the brake circuits. ~~Load~~Compressed air consumer circuit 38 can be a high-pressure circuit.

Service-brake circuits 26, 28 are provided with compressed air reservoirs 90, 92 in conformity with EU Directive 98/12. High-pressure circuit 38 is provided with a compressed air reservoir 39.

The inventive compressed air system makes it possible to dispense with compressed air reservoirs in circuits 30, 32, 34, 36. As an example, it is permissible to supply other ~~consumers~~compressed air consumer circuits from the service-brake circuits (circuits 26 and 28), provided the braking function or braking action of service-brake circuits 26 and 28 is not impaired.

Via a line 40', compressor 7 is mechanically (pneumatically) controlled by compressor controller 8. Compressor controller 8 ~~comprises~~includes a solenoid valve 94 of small nominal width that can be switched by electronic control unit 84. In the de-energized normal state it is vented, as illustrated, whereby compressor 7 is turned on. If compressor 7 is to be turned off, for example because all ~~load~~compressed air consumer circuits are filled with compressed air, control unit 84 changes over solenoid valve 94 so that the pressure-actuable compressor is turned off via line 40'. If solenoid valve 94 is switched to de-energized condition, for example because a ~~load~~compressed air consumer circuit needs compressed air, solenoid valve 94 is again switched to the normal state illustrated in the drawing, whereby line 40' is vented and ~~in this way~~ compressor 7 is turned on.

Air-dryer part 10 ~~comprises~~includes a solenoid valve 100 with small nominal width, ~~whose~~An inlet 102 is in communication with distributor line 14, ~~and via whose outlet 104~~ there is ~~pneumatically switched a~~A shutoff valve 106, which is in communication with supply line 40 of compressor 7 and ~~serves~~is used for venting of the air dryer, is pneumatically switched via an outlet 104.

When solenoid valve 100 is switched to passing condition, compressor 7 no longer discharges into the ~~load~~consumer circuits but instead discharges to the atmosphere via valve 106 ~~to the atmosphere~~. At the same time, dry air flows from distributor line 14 (out of reservoirs 90, 92 of the service-brake circuits) to the atmosphere via solenoid valve 100, throttle 108 and a check valve 110, through air dryer 44 for regeneration of its desiccant and further via filter 42 and valve 106 ~~to the atmosphere~~.

Reference numeral 112 denotes an overpressure valve.

Solenoid valves 16, 18, 20, 22, 24 are controlled by control unit 84, solenoid valves 16 to 22 of ~~load~~compressed air consumer circuits 26 to 34 being open in de-energized normal state, while solenoid valve 24 of high-pressure circuit 38 is closed in de-energized normal state. Pilot-controlled solenoid valves can also be used. The pressure in the circuits is directly monitored at the solenoid valves by pressure sensors 72, 74, 76, 78, 80.

If the pressure were to drop in a ~~load~~compressed air consumer circuit, for example in circuit 30 (trailer-brake circuit), the supply of compressed air ~~supply also takes place~~is effected by the service-brake circuits 26 and 28 via the open solenoid valves, the pressure in secondary ~~load~~compressed air consumer circuits 30 to 36 being adjusted by pressure limiter 70 to a lower level, such as, for example, 8.5 bar, than the pressure level of, for example, 10.5 bar in service-brake circuits 26 and 28 ~~(see hereinafter)~~. High-pressure circuit 38 is normally shut off

by solenoid valve 24, and therefore is not in communication with the other circuits. ~~The high-pressure circuit usually~~ has a higher pressure level ~~than the other compressed air consumer circuits, such as,~~ for example 12.5 bar.

In the inventive compressed air system, the pressures in ~~all load~~ compressed air consumer circuits 26 to 38 ~~are~~ is measured by means of pressure sensors 72 to 80, which transmit electrical pressure signals to electronic control device 84 for evaluation. The control device compares the measured pressure values with a lower threshold value, which corresponds to the pressure to be adjusted in the respective ~~load~~ compressed air consumer circuit. If the pressure of the brake circuits drops below this threshold value due to rapid air consumption or to line rupture or break, the control device switches solenoid valve 24 of high-pressure circuit 38 to open position, so that the high-pressure circuit is in communication with brake circuits 26 and 28 via connecting line 14 and open solenoid valves 16 and 18 and the energy stored in the high-pressure circuit is directed into the intact brake circuits and ~~in this way~~ the intact brake circuits are refilled. At the same time, control device 84 shuts off the defective circuits, by switching their solenoid valves to closed position; ~~At the same time, and~~ compressor 7 also delivers into the intact brake circuits.

Refilling takes place very rapidly, ~~since~~ because the high-pressure circuit delivers a ~~much larger~~ greater air flow per unit time into the brake circuits (up to several thousand liter/min.) than the compressor, ~~which in the embodiments used has a delivery capacity of~~ (approximately 200 to 400 liter/min.), ~~as already mentioned hereinabove.~~

~~As soon as~~ When the control device senses that the pressures in the high-pressure circuit and the pressure in the filled brake circuits ~~have become~~ are equal or that the index pressure value has been reached in the brake circuits, ~~the control device~~ closes solenoid valve

24 once again to interrupt the communication with the brake circuits.

~~The~~ It should be appreciated that the inventive method ensures distribution of
energy between the ~~load~~ consumer circuits, ~~whereby very~~ the salutary result being safe vehicle
operating conditions ~~are obtained~~.

Referring now to Fig. 2, ~~shows~~ the pressure variations during a brake-circuit failure due, for example, to a line break ~~of in~~ brake circuit 26 at instant 120, and during refilling of intact brake circuit 28 at instant 124, are shown. ~~Along with~~ In addition to the pressure drop in circuit 26 (see curve 72), the pressure in brake circuit 28 (see curve 74), which is in pneumatic communication, and in connecting line 14 (not illustrated) also drops. The pressure drop in connecting line 14 ~~has the consequence that~~ results in solenoid valve 94, which turns on the compressor ~~[,?] is,~~ being actuated at instant 121. To resupply intact brake circuit 28 with air, solenoid valve 24 of high-pressure circuit 38 is switched to the open state at instant 124, and defective brake circuit 26 is closed ~~practically~~ approximately at the same time by the closing of solenoid valve 16, so that intact circuit 28, and if necessary pneumatically coupled circuits 30 and 36, which are also intact, can be rapidly resupplied with air. The pressure in ~~these~~ circuits 30 and 36 undergoes little change during the entire venting operation, since pressure limiter 70 ensures decoupling of the pressure sensors from distribution line 14 (see broken pressure curves 76, 78 ~~in Fig. 2~~).

In Fig. 2, the closing of solenoid valve 16 is illustrated at an instant 123, which occurs ~~very close in time~~ shortly before instant 124; this is explained in ~~some what more~~ greater detail hereinafter. With the opening of solenoid valve 24 of high-pressure circuit 38 and the closing of defective brake circuit 26 at instant 124, the pressure in brake circuit 28 rises very rapidly, until the pressures of the high-pressure circuit and the pressure of the brake circuit

become equal or until the index pressure of the brake circuit is reached. The pressure drop in the high-pressure circuit during this rapid resupply with air can be detected at pressure sensor 80 (see drop of pressure curve 80 of high-pressure circuit 38 at instant 124). After it has been resupplied with air, circuit 28 is shut off for a certain time by switching solenoid valve 18 to blocked state at instant 125. During this time, the high-pressure circuit is refilled via the compressor, which has been switched on since the actuation of solenoid valve 94 at instant 121. To complete this refilling operation (instant 126), the control signals for solenoid valves 94 and 24 are reset once again, ~~meaning that~~which means that solenoid valve 94 is electrically energized and solenoid valve 24 is switched to the closed normal state once again. Thereafter, the control signal for brake circuit 28 is also reset (instant 127), ~~meaning that~~which means that solenoid valve 18 is switched to open normal state once again.

Reference numerals 122 and 123 denote two brief test blocking pulses with a duration of 0.2 sec., for example, transmitted to the control input of solenoid valve 16 before instant 124 of definitive blocking of defective circuit 26. Such test blocking pulses can be used for safe detection of the failure of a circuit (circuit 26 in this case). The test blocking pulse at instant 122 blocks solenoid valve 16 for the indicated time interval of 0.2 sec. As a consequence of this blockage, the pressure at pressure sensor 74 in unaffected brake circuit 28 rises momentarily, because pressure reservoir 92 can supply air to intact circuit 28 once again when venting is interrupted by defective circuit 26. ~~As regards~~With respect to defective circuit 26, a faster pressure drop takes place at pressure sensor 72 during the time of the test blocking pulse, since repressurization by the intact circuits is interrupted. Since the pressure drops more rapidly only in circuit 26 during the test blocking pulse, the suspicion that this circuit is defective is strengthened. In order to be certain whether this conclusion is correct, this test can be repeated

by turning off valve 16 several times in pulsed manner. In the practical example according to ~~to~~ illustrated in Fig. 2, this is done a second and ~~last~~ third time at instant 123. The pressure again drops more rapidly in circuit 26. It is now definitively established that circuit 26 is the defective circuit. Thereafter, (beginning at instant 124), ~~it~~ circuit 26 is kept ~~permanently~~ blocked.

It will thus be seen that the objects set forth above, among those made apparent from the preceding description, are efficiently attained, and since certain changes may be made in the above constructions without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention, it is intended that all matter contained in the above description or shown in the accompanying drawings shall be interpreted as illustrative and not in a limiting sense.

It is also to be understood that the following claims are intended to cover all of the generic and specific features of the invention herein described and all statements of the scope of the invention which, as a matter of language, might be said to fall therebetween.

What is claimed is: